

child care providers are underpaid, unsupported and undervalued.

These providers are responsible for the social, emotional and mental development of the children in their care. They teach skills that young children need in order to be ready to read and learn when they go to school. They help young children learn about the world around them and how to interact with others. Yet the average salary of an early care and education workers is \$18,820, and less than a third of them have health insurance.

In Massachusetts, those numbers are only marginally better—childcare workers are paid a little over \$10 an hour and earn \$22,760 annually. By comparison, registered nurses make \$37,511 a year, police officers earn \$37,078, and K through 12 teachers earn \$32,306.

The story of Melvina Vandross is typical. She has spent the last 20 years caring for children in poor families in New York City. Due to the lack of sufficient Federal subsidies, she makes less than \$19,000 a year in one of the world's most expensive cities. She has no health insurance, and could not afford to get her son the tutor he needed to succeed in school. Her commitment to the futures of some of the Nation's least fortunate children has made it nearly impossible for her to provide for herself and her family.

Melvina's story is unacceptable. It is unacceptable that Head Start teachers in Montana qualify for Habitat for Humanity homes. The men and women who shape the lives of our Nation's children deserve fair wages and benefits. The sacrifice we are asking of them for their indispensable work is too high.

Inadequate wages and benefits have made it difficult to recruit and retain qualified childcare providers. Turnover rates are going through the roof. Almost 30 percent of child care providers leave the field every year. Neither their wages nor their turnaround rates are acceptable. If we want our children to be cared for by qualified providers who have a good education and sound understanding of child development, we must see that they are fairly compensated and supported, commensurate with their contribution to our national, civic and economic well-being. They are indeed deserving of a worthy wage for their worthy work that is so important for the Nation's future. I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution. We owe it to the Nation's childcare providers, and we owe it to our Nation's children and their families.

WORLD MALARIA DAY

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, April 25 is World Malaria Day. That is the day that the world pauses to acknowledge that over a million people a year die of a disease borne by mosquitoes, a disease that we know how to prevent, a disease that we know how to treat. The

most vulnerable are children under the age of 5; every 30 seconds a child dies of malaria. Pregnant women are also at high risk; 10,000 expectant mothers perish each year from the disease. Malaria exacts an enormous economic and social toll as well, costing the poorest countries in the world billions of dollars each year in lost productivity, working days, revenue, and investment. With global weather patterns changing, malaria is spreading further, reaching areas that were previously unaffected.

Last month, the Foreign Relations Committee approved a bipartisan bill that could, over the course of time, help to save millions of lives by providing people with the means to prevent and treat malaria. I am proud to have sponsored this bill, along with Senator LUGAR and our other colleagues. This legislation, S. 2731, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, authorizes up to \$5 billion over the next 5 years to combat malaria, a dramatic increase in resources. It also formally establishes the position of a global malaria coordinator to oversee U.S. programs and strengthens U.S. participation in the multilateral global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. These efforts will build on the dramatic early success of the President's malaria initiative, which was launched 3 years ago by President Bush. Already, under this initiative, the island of Zanzibar has witnessed a 95 percent reduction in infection rates among children. Through bednets, spraying of homes, and providing drugs, we can replicate that success on a much broader scale.

Similar legislation has passed the House of Representatives, and our bill received a strong vote of support in committee here. It is my hope that the Senate will soon take up S. 2731, that we will debate whatever differences we may have and vote on it, and that the President will be able to sign it into law well in advance of the G-8 meeting in July. If so, he will be in an excellent position to help convince other countries to undertake similar commitments. Even more important, we will let the people of Africa and other hard-hit areas of the globe know that the United States is sustaining the commitments that it first made in 2003 when Congress passed the original United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act.

DENIM DAY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize April 28, 2008, as the first annual "Denim Day" in New Jersey.

Each year, Denim Day is observed in communities across the country to raise awareness and educate the public about rape and sexual assault. The observance was created in response to an appalling 1998 decision of the Italian

Supreme Court. In that decision, the court overturned a rape conviction because the victim was wearing tight jeans at the time of the attack and must have helped her rapist remove them. Women and men around the world were rightly outraged by the verdict, and wearing jeans on Denim Day has become an international symbol of protest, calling attention to the horrible crime of rape and the destructive attitudes that prevent sexual assault victims from receiving justice.

Every 2 minutes, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted. Despite its prevalence, sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes in the world, meaning many attackers never spend a day in prison for their offenses. Denim Day in New Jersey will send a strong and powerful message that sexual assault is always wrong.

I hope this observance will encourage more sexual assault victims to come forward and hold their attacker accountable, as well as provide some comfort to the victims of sexual assault, who will know that they are not alone.

Once again, I would like to recognize April 28, 2008, as "Denim Day" in New Jersey and reiterate my strong support for observing this important day.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL KYLE WESTON WILKS

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I join Arkansans today in mourning the loss of Cpl Kyle Weston Wilks of Rogers, AR. He paid the ultimate sacrifice to stand up for democracy and peace. We are grateful for Corporal Wilks' service to our Nation and we will honor his memory. I know his family and friends will remember this fallen hero's great smile and penchant for life, including playing sports and watching Razorback football and NASCAR.

A marine with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit since September 2004, Corporal Wilks helped with the evacuation of Beirut in 2006 and most recently served in Afghanistan. During this time, Corporal Wilks was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Before his second deployment, Corporal Wilks visited New York to see Ground Zero, which reaffirmed his commitment to military service and his country. He was a true patriot who planned to use his training as a military policeman to begin a career in law enforcement.

Mr. President, Arkansas has now lost over 70 soldiers in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As long as I serve in public office, I will work to honor their service, live up to their courage, and protect the principles they fought to preserve.

Corporal Wilks has said his parents, Randy and Kathy Wilks, were his heroes. My prayers are with them, as well as his sister Makayla, during this difficult time.

LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I wish today to strongly support the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which would clarify the laws against pay discrimination. I would like to thank Senator KENNEDY, chairman of the Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions Committee, for his leadership on the bill. He has been a tireless champion for civil rights and I applaud his work.

Mr. President, we as Americans are bound by a powerful idea—a revolutionary idea—that our nation is a work in progress. It is an idea etched in the words of the Constitution: “to form a more perfect union.” It is an idea that has inspired some of our Nation’s greatest achievements—abolishing slavery, banning segregation, and expanding voting rights. It is an idea that brings the best out of our public service.

This week in the Senate we have an opportunity to take another important step along our path of progress—to make our union more perfect.

It is no secret that pay gaps exist in our country. Gender, race, national origin, age, disability, or religion should not have any effect on a worker’s pay. But, sadly, they do. Nationally, women earn 77 cents for every dollar that men earn. In Colorado, women earn 79 cents for every dollar that men earn. The inequities are even clearer when you break the numbers in Colorado down by ethnicity. On average, African-American women earn 61.2 percent of what White men earn. Asian-American women earn 68.4 percent; Hispanic women earn 52.4 percent; and Native American/Alaskan Native women only earn 54.7 percent of what White men earn.

These pay disparities persist partly because women still occupy fewer high-paying jobs than men. But they also persist because of continued pay discrimination in the workplace. We have laws on the books to make pay discrimination illegal, but those laws can be improved.

Lilly Ledbetter’s case is a classic, and tragic, example. Ms. Ledbetter worked for the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Gadsden, AL, for 19 years. She was a manager, a position predominately occupied by men at the company. After early retirement, Ms. Ledbetter learned, from an anonymous note, that male managers at the company were making 20 to 40 percent more than she was making in the same job.

So Ms. Ledbetter took Goodyear to court. The jury found that the company violated her rights under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They awarded her back pay and damages.

The Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, however, reversed the dis-

trict court decision. They said that Ms. Ledbetter filed her case too late. They said she needed to file her complaint within 180 days after the alleged unlawful employment practice occurred.

Rightly, Ms. Ledbetter appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In its 5-to-4 decision, the Supreme Court held that the 180-day statute of limitations begins when the original discriminatory act occurs. Whether the worker even knew that the discriminatory decision was made is of no consequence. Whether they were discriminated against for 1 or 20 years is also insignificant under the Court’s majority decision.

It is critical to understand the profound impact of the Court’s decision. If an employee cannot challenge a discriminatory paycheck beyond the 180 days that the employer made the discriminatory decision, companies that discriminate cannot be held accountable for their actions. Six months after a discriminatory action, the bad actor is in the clear. This was certainly not the intent of Congress when it enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In her dissenting opinion, Justice Ginsburg raised a good question and a matter of common sense. How was Ms. Ledbetter supposed to know, and therefore complain, when she was first given a lower raise than her male counterparts? Goodyear, like many employers, kept salaries and raises confidential.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would correct this injustice. The bill would amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other civil rights laws to make clear that the 180-day statute of limitations on a pay discrimination claim, based on gender, race, national origin, religion, age or disability, would restart every time an employee receives any wages or benefits affected by the discriminatory act. This was the law of the land for decades, with the exception of three States, until the U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Ledbetter v. Goodyear*.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act should receive the unanimous support of this body. We should all agree on the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work.’ We should all agree that pay discrimination has no place in a 21st century America. And we should all agree that when there is a clear problem with the existing law, we should correct it.

We have come a long way over the last 2½ centuries toward opening the doors of opportunity to every American. But ours is a nation still in progress, and our Union can still be perfected.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in strong support of the Fair Pay Restoration Act, S. 1843,—and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bipartisan measure, introduced by Senator KENNEDY and supported by 40 of my colleagues in the Senate. This bill would rightly provide victims of workplace gender discrimination with the reasonable timeframe they deserve

to file discrimination suits under Federal law—while restoring longstanding precedent that was regrettably reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court last year.

I firmly believe that America should be a global leader on issues related to gender discrimination and equal pay, but with its decision in *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, the Supreme Court telegraphed entirely the wrong message to the rest of the world about the value of equal pay for equal work—and ignored the realities of pay discrimination. Furthermore, with the economy in crisis, gas prices sky-high, and housing values falling, it is all the more critical we not lose vital ground on fair pay.

It is no secret that women play a substantial leadership role in our Nation—we are business leaders, entrepreneurs, politicians, mothers, and much more. But regrettably, wage discrimination still exists and has remained constant for many years. In 1963, the year of the Equal Pay Act’s passage, full-time working women were paid 59 cents on average to the dollar received by men. In 2004, more than 40 years later, women were only paid 77 cents for every dollar earned by men.

What is even more troubling is that, according to a National Academy of Sciences report, between one-third and one-half of the wage disparities between men and women cannot adequately be explained by differences in experience, education, or other legitimate qualifications. And notably, this wage discrimination exists despite the passage of the Equal Pay Act that made it illegal to pay women less than men for performing equal work.

Wage discrimination also continues to exist despite the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which outlawed discrimination in employment and wages on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, and national origin. This pernicious injustice continues despite Congress passing the 1991 Civil Rights Act, which I strongly supported, along with most of my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle.

As a former cochair of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, I have been a longtime advocate in the pay equity debate. As some of my colleagues may remember, in 1984, Representative Claudine Schneider, R-RI, Representative Nancy Johnson R-CT, and I wrote to the Reagan administration asking that it prevent the Justice Department from weighing in against *AFSCME v. Washington*, which supported the concept of pay equity. And as a Member of the House of Representatives, I repeatedly introduced bipartisan resolutions that would have established a commission to study compensation practices in Congress from 1984 to 1993. It is therefore simply unconscionable to imagine that in this day and age, wage-setting practices are still being affected by historical gender biases resulting in the undervaluation of work and low pay for women.